INSPECTION OF COCONUT PALMS.

TREES AFFECTED BY FUNGUS DISEASE, NOT BUD ROT.

A reference appeared in the *Guardian* last week to a warning given by a party of visiting horiculturists to the effect that our coconut palms were menaced by a most serious disease—that of bud rot. Dr. Fairchild and his party spent some time about a fortnight ago in inspecting the flora of the island and were greatly surprised at the prevalence of pests and plant diseases found on our palms in particular. They found that many of them were affected and pronounced the disease to be bud rot—a very serious matter, as it spreads very quickly and decay is rapid.

It was realised that something should be done without delay, and Mr. Arthur Langlois, a member of the Country Garden Club, reported several instances in which he believed the trees to be affected by bud rot. Mr. L. A. Jervis, the Agricultural Instructor, immediately made a special investigation of these coconut palms and found that in the six cases cited there was no evidence of bud rot, but that the trees were suffering from a fungus disease which affect the young roots and the tissue of the lower portion of the stem, resulting in *rot of the bud.* There is a vast difference, according to Mr. Jervis, between bud rot—which is a microbe, and can be carried about in the atmosphere and would spread easily to neighbouring trees—and rot of the bud.

A typical sign of bud rot is that the lower limbs will remain perfectly healthy, while the bud dies and falls out. In the case of rot of the bud, the tree starts to die from the lower limbs and eventually the bud also dies, leaving the intermediate branches in a particularly healthy condition. The investigation shows that the sick appearance of the trees in question is caused by the presence of a fungus growth which affects the young roots and the tissue of the lower stems. Bud rot is a most serious disease and Mr. Jervis is most anxious that growers of palm trees should note that during his careful investigation he has found only *one* palm affected with this disease, and this has been carefully destroyed.

But the fact remains that many palms are suffering from the fungus disease, which, though not so serious a matter as bud rot, destroys the affected palm within a few months. This fungus disease, known as rot of the bud, appears in most cases under abnormal conditions, when the trees is left open to attack after a long spell of drought followed by heavy rains or after a severe wind storm followed by heavy rains. Another cause is where the soil becomes sour owing to lack of proper drainage. In cases where the trees are properly supplied with suitable plant food there is little danger of attack. An instance of this may be found in the New Colonial Hotel Gardens, where the trees receive excellent care and are entirely free from pests.

In 1918, Sir Frances Watts, the Imperial Commissioner of Agriculture then in Barbados, was invited by our Government to visit the Bahamas and give us full information for the betterment of agricultural conditions. A special investigation of the coconut palms in various parts of New Providence was made at that time and though only one or two cases of bud rot were found, it was discovered that many plants were then affected by the rot of the bud. But rot was found at "Love," in the western end of the island and rot of the bud was found to be prevalent in the Priory grounds, where it had destroyed quite a number of beautiful, bearing trees. This disease had evidently started several months after the entire plot had been covered to a depth of three or more feet with sponge clippings, and the cause of the rot of the bud could therefore be traced to the ill effect of the sponge, which had caused the soil to turn sour. The beneficial rays of the sunlight had been prevented from reaching the soil and the beneficial bacteria necessary to the soil were unable to live and thrive under such conditions.

There are several instances to which Mr. Jervis referred where the indiscrimate or careless use of sponge clippings had caused the death of valuable trees. At Margaret's villa, out west, many coconut palms died about 1923 from the effects of too large quantities of sponge, and a beautiful Norfolk Pine which once stood in Charlotte Street, opposite Queen's College, died when the grounds in which it stood were used as a sponge yard, being covered to a depth of six or eight feet.

Mr. Jervis has left several specimens of diseased bark and roots at the *Guardian* office, where they may be seen by any interested persons. The bark and roots are taken from trees which are affected by the fungus disease responsible for the condition known as rot of the bud. An affected tree has been cut down at Fort Montagu, to the north east of the jib and observers should specially notice that while the upper portion of the tree is apparently perfectly healthy, the lower portion of the trunk is rapidly decaying. Mr. Jervis advises that all affected palms be taken out completely and a liberal quantity of Bordeaux mixture applied to the holes left vacant, and that no palm tree should be planted in these holes. It would be advisable to burn the portions of the roots taken from the hole.

With regard to insects, there are ten different species which affect the coconut palm, but most of these are kept under control by the two-spotted lady-bug, which feeds on the destructive scale insect. The spread of the scales could be checked by spraying the under part of the fronds with a suitable insecticide, or by removing and burning all badly affected fronds.

The Nassau Guardian 20,530 (January 13, 1932): 8.

The Nassau Guardian 20,527 (January 2, 1932): 4.

THE "UTOWANA" IN THE HARBOUR.

The large yacht *Utowana*, owned by Mr. Allison Armour, arrived again in Nassau Harbour on Thursday and will be leaving to-morrow for the Out Islands with a party on an exploration trip in charge of Dr. David Fairchild. The first destination is Cat Island and the party, numbering 8, do not expect to return to Nassau until April.

The Nassau Guardian 20,527
(January 2, 1932): 4

MENACE TO COCONUT PALMS.

WARNING BY VISITING HORTICULTURISTS.

Dr. David Fairchild and his party who visited Nassau last week in the yacht *Utowana* spent a good deal of time going about New Providence inspecting the flora of the island. They were greatly surprised at the prevalence of pests and plant diseases which are sucking the vitality of the palms in particular. On the rarest palm in the island they found no less than four different pests and many of the coconut palms are diseased, having been attacked by bud rot. This is a very serious matter as before we realise it our coconuts will go the way of our citrus trees and it is time that steps were taken to prevent this disaster. In Florida when a case of bud rot is discovered the area is at once placed under quarantine. Plant diseases are controlled in Jamaica and all colonies with a properly equipped agricultural department and the sooner we wake up to the necessity of procuring an expert agriculturalist on horticulturalist for the Bahamas the better. Unless something is done without delay the result will be serious and we are indebted to our visitors for the kindly interest they display in these islands by drawing our attention to the danger of delay. Our palms have been particularly prone to disease since the battering they have received in recent hurricanes and if we are to preserve them no time should be lost in adopting the necessary measures. The cost of expert knowledge would be comparatively small and any money spent in this direction would be a sound investment. We hope that the urgency of this matter will be recognised and that it will be brought before the Legislature during the coming session.

Man Dies On Yacht Off Rum Cay

The Tribune 29 (17; January 8, 1832): 1

Mr. Jordan L. Mott, American citizen, aged 74 years, who was a guest on board Mr. Alison Armour's yacht *Utowana*, now on a scientific cruise through the Bahamas, died very suddenly of heart disease at 9.20 a.m. yesterday, when the *Utowana* was off Rum Cay on her way to Cat Island.

Mr. Mott, who had been suffering from heart trouble for some time, was apparently in good health at the time of his death.

The *Utowana* returned to Nassau at 10 a.m. today, and the body will be embalmed, to await the arrival from New York on Sunday of Mr. Mott's relatives.

The Nassau Guardian 20,530 (January 13, 1932): 4

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO MR. JORDON MOTT.

A memorial service for Mr. Jordon L. Mott, who died suddenly on board the *Utowana* last Thursdy morning was held in the Cathedral yesterday and was conducted by the Very Rev. the Dean.